

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ROME 10729 052149Z

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1173

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, VT, CI

SUBJECT: CHURCH DESCRIBES ITS ACTIVITIES IN CHILE

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: RESPONDING TO ITALIAN PRESS ALLEGATIONS THAT CHURCH AVOIDING NECESSARY INVOLVEMENT IN CHILEAN EVENTS, VATICAN PRESS HAS PUBLISHED WITH EVIDENT SATISFACTION A LIST OF WHAT CHILEAN CHURCH HAS IN FACT BEEN DOING TO ALLEVIATE SITUATION. END SUMMARY.

2. IN AN UNSIGNED AND THUS UNDOUBTEDLY AUTHORITATIVE EDITORIAL, VATICAN SEMI-OFFICIAL DAILE "OSSERVATORE ROMANO" OCTOBER 5 HAS RESPONDED IN PARTICULAR TO ARTICLE IN LAST WEEK'S MILAN "CORRIERE DELLA SERA" WHICH QUESTIONED WHETHER CHURCH HAS BEEN SUFFICIENTLY ENGAGED IN CHILE. ADOPTING SAME TITLE USED BY "CORRIERE", "AND YOU, CHURCH, WHAT HAVE YOU DONE FOR CHILE", EDITORIALIST DESCRIBES WITH OBVIOUS SATISFACTION VARIOUS INITIATIVES CHILEAN CHURCH UNDERTOOK BEFORE AND AFTER COUP.

3. IN CLEAR REBUKE TO ITALIAN MEDIA IN GENERAL, EDITORIAL PRUDENTLY WARNS AGAINST DANGER OF DRAWING CONCRETE CONCLUSIONS ABOUT WHAT NOW TAKING PLACE IN CHILE, ESPECIALLY QUESTION OF MASS EXECUTIONS, SINCE FACTS SIMPLY NOT AVAILABLE. FIRST IMPORTANT CHURCH EFFORT, VALUE OF WHICH WRITER CLAIMS CANNOT BE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 02 ROME 10729 052149Z

DENIED, WAS EFFORT OF BISHOPS, NOTABLY CARDINAL SILVA, TO ENCOURAGE

VARIOUS MEMBERS OF UP GOVERNMENT INCLUDING PRESIDENT ALLENDE, PLUS THE THEN OPPOSITION TO REESTABLISH A DIALOGUE BETWEEN EXECUTIVE AND THE PARLIAMENT. BISHOPS EXHORTATIONS TO RESPECT CONSTITUTION AND LAWS WERE COUPLED WITH APPEALS TO POPULACE TO DISPLAY CHRISTIAN BROTHERHOOD AND TRADITIONAL CHILEAN RESPECT FOR DEMOCRACY. AFTER COUP BISHOPS ISSUED STATEMENT CITING THEIR EARLIER EFFORTS URGING RESPECT FOR CONSTITUTION AND DEMOCRACY AND APPEALING FOR RECONCILIATION AND HALT OF BLOOD-SHED. STATEMENT ALSO ASKED THAT BODIES OF VICTIMS BE RESPECTED FOREMOST AMONG THEM THAT OF ALLENDE.

4. ACCORDING TO EDITORIAL, CHILEAN EPISCOPATE HAS SINCE COUP STRESSED TWO FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES: FIRST IS NEED TO CONSERVE BENEFITS TO PEASANTS AND WORKERS WHICH ACHIEVED UNDER PREVIOUS GOVERNMENTS. SECOND IS NEED FOR URGENT RETURN TO "INSTITUTIONAL NORMALITY" IN KEEPING WITH CHILE'S WISDOM AND PATRIOTISM AND IN "DEMOCRATIC TRADITION AND HUMANISM OF ARMED FORCES."

5. THUS, CONCLUDES EDITORIAL, CHURCH IS DOING EVERYTHING WITHIN LIMITS ITS LEGITIMATE ROLE TO URGE PEACE AND RECONCILIATION IN CHILE. WRITER NOTED THAT EVEN UNDER ALLENDE, "A REGIME WITH WHICH IT COULD NOT SHARE IDEOLOGY," CHURCH MADE BEST EFFORT TO ENCOURAGE UNITY OF CHILEAN PEOPLE. THIS EFFORT WILL CONTINUE UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES. BEAUDRY

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